

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONTEV 00262 311802Z

64

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-11 AID-20

FEA-02 SCI-06 COME-00 INT-08 AGR-20 DRC-01 /193 W

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R 311727Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5926

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USUN 280

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, LE, UY

SUBJ: LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS URUGUAY

CINCSO FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY: THE FOUR-DAY VISIT OF LEBANESE FONMIN
FU'AD NAFFA DISAPPOINTED MANY URUGUAYANS, WHO HAD HOPED
FOR SOME EASING OF THE ENERGY CRISIS IN A COUNTRY WHICH
IMPORTS ALL OF ITS OIL. THE EXTENSIVE PRESS COVERAGE
DURING NAFFA'S FOUR-DAY STAY INCLUDED RUMORS OF BEEF-
FOR-PETROLEUM SWAPS, ARAB INVESTMENTS, AND A FREE ZONE
FOR THE IMPORTATION AND STORAGE OF URUGUAYAN BEEF IN
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PAGE 02 MONTEV 00262 311802Z

LEBANON, BUT NO AGREEMENT WAS ANNOUNCED AT THE VISIT'S

END. FONOFF SOURCES SUGGEST THAT THE GOU HAD SHIFTED EARLIER TOWARDS THE ARABS BUT THAT NAFFA'S PERFORMANCE HERE MAY HAVE DELAYED ANY PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THIS CHANGE. END SUMMARY.

2. NAFFA AND HIS URUGUAYAN-BORN WIFE ARRIVED ON JAN 26 AS PART OF A MONTH-LONG, EIGHT-NATION TOUR OF LATIN AMERICA TO EXPLAIN THE ARAB POINT OF VIEW ON THE MIDDLE EAST. URUGUAYAN FONMIN BLANCO'S PRELIMINARY MEETING WITH NAFFA WAS DESCRIBED BY THE GOU-LINKED NEWSPAPER EL PAIS AS "FRANKLY POSITIVE". LATER IN THE DAY NAFFA TOLD THE LEBANESE CULTURAL UNION THAT THE ARABS WERE USING OIL AS AN "ELEMENT OF PEACE" AND "AN INSTRUMENT OF INFORMATION AND PRESSURE."

3. NAFFA MET SEPARATELY WITH BLANCO AND PRESIDENT BORDABERRY ON THE 28TH. AFTERWARD, HE DISAPPOINTED A PRESS CONFERENCE BY ADMITTING THAT HE HAD SEEN THE DAMAGING EFFECTS OF THE ENERGY CRISIS ON URUGUAY, BUT STATING THAT HE HAD COME ONLY TO EXPLAIN A JUST CAUSE AND NOT TO MAKE COMMERCIAL DEALS.

4. AFTER AN UNSCHEDULED SECOND MEETING WITH BORDABERRY ON THE 29TH, NAFFA TOLD A SOMETIMES-HOSTILE PRESS CONFERENCE THAT THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH SUPPORTED THE ARABS MIGHT EXPECT LOANS AND CAPITAL INVESTMENTS, BUT THAT URUGUAY HAD NOT YET GONE FAR ENOUGH EVEN THOUGH ITS PRO-ISRAELI POLICY HAD BEGUN TO CHANGE. HE ADDED THAT THE OIL COMPANIES AND NOT THE ARABS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HIGH PRICE OF PETROLEUM. NAFFA DEPARTED URUGUAY WITHOUT A FINAL COMMUNIQUE OR JOINT STATEMENT.

5. PRESS REACTION TO THE VISIT RANGED FROM EL DIA'S EFFUSIVE WELCOME TO THE GOU-LINKED EL PAIS'S SHORT BUT BITTER EDITORIAL DENOUNCING THE USE OF PETROLEUM AS A WEAPON.

6. COMMENT: WEAVING TOGETHER STRANDS OF INFO FROM FONOFF SOURCES, IT APPEARS THAT THE GOU DECIDED PRIOR TO LAST FALL'S UNGA SESSION TO MOVE AWAY FROM ITS POSITION OF STRONG SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL. THESE SOURCES CLAIMED THIS WAS EVIDENT IN SEVERAL MIDDLE EAST VOTES ON WHICH URUGUAY ABSTAINED "ALONG WITH SWEDEN AND A FEW OTHERS." THESE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MONTEV 00262 311802Z

SOURCES BELIEVE THAT NAFFA'S VISIT WAS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE IN THE SENSE THAT HE CAME AND PUBLICLY URGED A POSTURE TOWARDS WHICH THE GOU WAS ALREADY MOVING BUT ON WHICH IT MUST NOW REMAIN SILENT FOR SOME TIME IN ORDER TO AVOID A BLAST FROM PRO-ISRAELI ELEMENTS AND TO AVOID GIVING THE APPEARANCE OF HAVING CAVED TO ARAB PRESSURES. HAAHR

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